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## SPANISH GRAMMARS.

*A Brief Spanish Grammar* with historical Introductions and Exercises by A. HJALMAR EDGREN, Ph. D. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co.; 1891, 12mo. pp. viii, 123.

*A Practical Spanish Grammar* with Exercises and Themes by EUGENE W. MANNING. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1891. 16mo pp. vi, 243.

FROM the preface of Prof. Edgren's work, we learn that it

"is intended primarily for college classes and such students as would begin reading Spanish without waste of time, on the basis of an accurate knowledge of the essentials of its grammar."

This idea is a good one, but the way in which it has been developed, makes the use of the work as a text book extremely difficult, if one should attempt to follow the grammar systematically; for, in many cases, the author in his attempt to condense the material, has thereby sacrificed clearness, and in other cases the arrangement of the material is not well adapted for class work.

The book is divided into three parts; the first contains the elements of Grammar including the irregular verbs, and each chapter is preceded by "a brief sketch showing the relation between Latin and Spanish as regards the subject therein treated;" the second is devoted to syntax, with a short chapter on "Versification," and another on "Spanish words in English"; the third contains exercises to be used in connection with the elements,—the whole being followed by an alphabetical index.

As the working part of the grammar is confined to the first division and the exercises, my remarks must be devoted largely to these sections. I would simply note in passing that in the introductory chapter on "the Spanish Language," the words *alabarda* and *norte* are mentioned in connection with the Teutonic invasion. The first, however, may possibly be derived from Arabic *al harbet*, and the second from Anglo-Saxon *norð*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I. cf. Körting 'Lat.-Rom. Wörterbuch,' s. v.

The chapter on pronunciation may be characterized as deficient, at least, since in nearly every case where the author attempts to describe a sound that has not an exact English equivalent, the results are too indefinite to be of practical service to the beginner. To quote directly from the grammar: "e=close like *a* in 'fame' (but without its 'vanish') when it ends a syllable, save before ll. rr. . . . te-me-ré, le-che, me-tro" (p. 6). A similar definition in the same position, that is, "o=o in 'no' (without 'vanish') when it ends a syllable save before ll, rr"; "b=b; but between vowels it verges on a *v* sound, being made without firmly closing the lips" (p. 7). In addition to this indefinite statement, the author nowhere mentions the Spanish *v* and the student must naturally infer that it is like the English *v*. "J=rough aspirate h (always)" (p. 8).

The chapters on "Articles" and "Nouns" do not call for special comment.—In the treatment of adjectives, nothing is said regarding the position of adjectives before or after the noun, and in the exercise on this topic the student is referred to the chapter on the subject in the second part of the book. It seems to me that the treatment of this important matter might well have been inserted in the elements, in place of the pages occupied in treating "Augmentatives" and "Diminutives," since the latter, for practical purposes, could have been omitted entirely or treated in an appendix. Under comparison of adjectives, the uses of *que* and *de* for the comparative particle 'than' are mentioned, but *de lo que* is omitted.

In the treatment of kindred pronoun groups we come to the first striking innovation of the author. The terms 'tonic' and 'atonic' are used instead of the old designations 'disjunctive' and 'conjunctive,' because the former refer to "their real scientific distinction." It is to be regretted that the old unscientific terms have not been retained, as in the author's 'French Grammar,' for the words 'tonic' and 'atonic' convey to the mind of the beginner no adequate idea of the force of these two forms of the pronoun. On the other hand, 'conjunctive' and 'disjunctive' immediately suggest to him the fact that the

personal pronoun is either 'joined to' or 'separated from' the verb.

The chapter on "Possessives" is meagre and inadequate. No discrimination is made between possessive adjectives and possessive pronouns,—a division that would certainly aid the student in the early stages of his study. And furthermore the learner is given no rules to guide him in the use of 'tonic' and 'atonic' forms of the possessives, but he must be satisfied with simply a definition of these terms. In fact, the whole treatment including possessive adjectives, and possessive pronouns, with the tonic and atonic forms of each, is condensed into less than a single page of the grammar.

Before taking up the irregular verbs, I will quote the author's preface in regard to the system he has adopted:

"It is hoped that the method of classification here adopted, reducing the number of irregular verbs to about thirty by conjugating all other verbs according to eight models (three leading and five subordinate)<sup>2</sup> will materially simplify a difficult and important topic."

The five (?) subordinate models are simply the first four classes of irregular verbs adopted by Knapp in his 'Spanish Grammar.' The difficulty in the grammar under consideration, is that only one model verb is presented in illustration of the characteristics of each class, consequently in order to know how any other verb is conjugated, the student must refer to the general index at the end of the book. It would have been more convenient at least, to have four or five leading verbs of each class conjugated in full, after studying which the student would be able to recognize the verb-compounds at a glance.

There are still left the twenty-nine verbs which can not be conjugated according to any one of the four classes just mentioned, hence the author calls them *irregular*. These twenty-nine irregular verbs are arranged in *alphabetical* order, with no attempt to classify them according to their irregularities, and the space allotted to each one is meagre in the extreme. To cite a characteristic example:

<sup>2</sup> This is evidently a slip of the pen. The author intended to say "seven models (three leading and four subordinate)."

"Querer: "wish, like Pres. group according to 84. a—Fut. *querré*.—Pret. *quisie*, *quisiste*, *quiso* etc. (*quis-* throughout the pret. group)" (p. 43).

The objection to the system here adopted will be apparent to any one who knows how much the student is aided by having these irregular forms presented in tabular view, and conjugated in full.

In regard to the auxiliary verbs, the student, according to the author's plan, must have studied the three regular conjugations and nearly all the irregular verbs, before he finds the paradigms of *ser*, *estar* and *haber*, since the "Auxiliary verbs are classified and described with the irregular verbs where they belong." In other words, he must know the simple tenses of all the regular verbs and most of the irregular forms before he is supposed to construct any of the compound tenses. This I would hold as a bad arrangement for the student "who would begin reading without loss of time."

The exercises, based on the first part of the grammar, are put at the end of the volume "where they will not impede reference to the grammar or disturb its methodical presentation." For a grammar intended primarily for reference, such a plan is the only feasible one, but in an elementary treatise intended for class drill, experience leads me to believe that the exercises should immediately follow the subject they are to illustrate. Moreover, quite a number of important grammatical principles are found only in the section devoted to the exercises; for example, explanation of the personal accusative construction (p. 94); periphrastic construction with personal pronouns (p. 99); "possessives agree with the object possessed" (p. 100), "cuyo agrees with the object possessed" (p. 101). Such facts as these seem sufficiently elementary and at the same time of sufficient importance to deserve a place in the first part of the grammar, and their place among the exercises must certainly "impede reference to the grammar," particularly to the elements.

Lack of space prevents more than a passing remark on the remainder of the work, that is, the syntax. As a whole this is by far the best part of the book, though even here we have

cases where in the author's attempt to condense, clearness has been sacrificed.—In the chapter on Versification, we have in four pages quite a skillful presentation of the subject.

The typographical errors noted are: p. 26 l. 2 *él de V.* for *el de V.*; p. 32 l. 18 *love* for *loved*; p. 34 l. 8 *amara* for *amaras*; p. 34 l. 9 *amara* for *amaras*; p. 38 l. 1, note to *pid*, 'ped' is omitted; p. 49 l. 6, *jamás* for *jamás*; p. 53 l. 1; "use of the possessive for the def. article," for use of the def. article for the possessive; p. 110 l. 16 *hare* for *haré*. The references omitted are: p. 21 l. 7, §15; p. 46, l. 41, §139; p. 47, l. 3, §137; p. 53 l. 2, §124. On the whole the grammar can hardly be commended; its many deficiencies can easily be attributed to the hurried manner in which the book was evidently compiled.

Prof. Manning's Grammar is arranged on a somewhat different plan from that followed in the one just mentioned. No separate division is made between grammar and syntax, but the parts of speech are treated in regular order, and given in sufficient detail to suit the purpose of the college student, who desires a reading knowledge of Spanish. A wise discrimination is shown by the author in deciding what to insert and what to omit in the treatment of the several subjects. Two serious defects in arrangement of the material must, however, be noted.

In the first place, the frequent abuse in the use of foot-notes, in which are found important grammatical facts that should have a prominent place in the body of the work, if we consider the general habit among students of utterly disregarding foot-notes. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this point: p. 10, note, explanation of the personal accusative construction with *á*; p. 22, note 4, *mas-de* (in contrast to *mas-que*) is used with numerals; p. 32, note, the periphrastic construction with personal pronouns; p. 46, note 2, "In exclamations, when followed by an adjective, *qué* means 'how'; as, ! *qué feliz*! 'how happy'!" and others. The author is, of course, lead to this arrangement from a desire to avoid crowding the text.

The second defect in arrangement concerns the irregular verbs. Their classification, which,

the author tells us, "is an entirely new one," consists in a division according to the three conjugations, but there appears to be no well-defined attempt to subdivide the several conjugations according to the phonetic peculiarities of the verbs. In fact, in the first and third conjugations, the verbs seem to be arranged alphabetically. It is difficult to see why the author should object to giving the student at least a few general principles that underlie the changes in the irregular verbs, and then make a classification according to these principles. Indeed, the arrangement adopted by Prof. Knapp in the work referred to above (p. 123), is so sensible a one, that it is hard to understand the motive for the present questionable distribution of this material; the author himself does not inform us why he thinks "it will greatly facilitate the mastering of the verb."

After these remarks concerning the arrangement of material, let us go back and note a few points in reference to the individual chapters. In the treatment of Pronunciation, the author makes the far too sweeping statement that

"the quality of the vowels remains the same, though they are short in unaccented and (generally) long in accented syllables" (p. 2).

The explanation of the sounds of *b* and *v* is too indefinite. On p. 15, the rules for the use and omission of the definite article are replaced by fourteen Spanish sentences from which the student must draw his own conclusions. The chapter on personal pronouns contains the welcome statement, that is generally overlooked in grammars: "The subject pronoun may either precede or follow the verb even in declarative sentences." By bearing in mind this fact the student will be saved much annoyance in the early stages of his reading.

In speaking of the use of *se* for the conjunctive pronouns *le*, *la*, etc. (p. 33), it would have been well to enforce upon the student's attention, that the similarity of this particle, to the reflexive pronoun *se* is purely accidental. The whole subject of the substitution of *se* for *le*, *la*, etc., is confusing for the beginner, and a little more help at this point, would greatly simplify matters.

Lesson xxxiii on "Prepositions (concluded)"

is devoted to "some illustrations of the different way of translating English prepositions into Spanish." The results are at least diverting. A few examples will suffice:

"Against: *Estaré de vuelta para fines del mes*";

"Over: *Vuelva V á leerlo*"

"Out: *Está de mal humor*"

These examples fill about three pages, which could have been better employed, it seems to me, by classifying the same sentences so as to illustrate the several Spanish prepositions; in this case it would have formed a useful chapter of reference.

The author has intentionally made the vocabularies of the several lessons long; in fact, "only about one half of the words are used in the themes." The reason for the introduction of this large number of extra words, is not clear to me, since, as the student does not need them in his exercises, and as he must gain his vocabulary by the constant reading of Spanish texts, these extra words might well have been omitted, thus considerably reducing the size of the volume.

The last chapter of the book (pp. 179-194) is devoted to a "Sketch of the History of the Spanish Language, especially in its relation with the Latin." Here we have a very good presentation of the salient features of the subject, with a short outline of the literary masters including the prominent writers of the present century.

The typographical errors noted are: p. 34 l. 25 *divertiendolos* for *divertiéndolos*; p. 36 l. 20, *mio* for *mis*; p. 50 l. 27 *está* for *esla*; p. 86, l. 20 *acuérdes V.* for *acuerde V.* or *acuerdese V.*; p. 86, l. 14, *el* for *él*; p. 91 l. 33 *intante* for *instante*; p. 102 l. 6 *preferio* for *prefirió*; p. 130 l. 32 *componendo* for *componiendo*; p. 134, l. 28 *entré ella* for *entró ella*; p. 154 l. 1, *fietas* for *fiestas*; p. 155, l. 1, *vir* for *ver*; p. 158, l. 27 *vistiendose* for *vistiéndose*; p. 158 l. 30, *dé el* for *de él*.

But for the treatment of the irregular verbs the little grammar would at once gain a high place in the college class room. It is to be hoped that we shall soon have a new edition of the work, for a few alterations would, in my opinion, make the book the best of its kind that has appeared in this country.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

### UNCLE REMUS.<sup>1</sup>

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

SIRS:—At the last meeting of the Modern Language Association of America, I could not agree with Prof. F. M. Warren's remarks on my paper read before the Association, and I still feel constrained to raise objections to the same views presented in the modified form in which they appear in your last issue (p. 94 f.). In philology it would be rather unsafe to define the reciprocal relations of three manuscripts, if there are sixty others that demand attention; and in the science of folk-lore it is hardly more warranted to strengthen a hypothesis by three partly obscure, partly incomplete variants of a story, while sixty others (including among them those that have been preserved) are not consulted. Variants of the story of the pot of butter, as I will also call it for the sake of convenience, are found among the Scandinavians of Norway, Sweden and Finland, in various parts of Russia, on the Balkan Peninsula, in Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, England, Scotland, Iceland, and even in Southern Siberia, Africa and on this continent.

The typical elements of the best European versions are as follows: Two animals—generally the bear (or wolf) and the fox—keep house together, or the latter is the guest of the former. The fox eats the honey or butter which belongs either to them in common or to the host alone, while he pretends to be called to childbirths or baptisms. The names of the children, three in number, indicate the amount eaten. When the theft is discovered, the fox proposes that they sleep in the sunshine or near some fire so that the honey may ooze out and betray the guilty one. While the other animal goes to sleep, the fox stays awake, puts the honey or butter on him and thereby convicts him of the theft.

Elements very much the same as those just noted, are found in a version which Dr. Samuel Garner (Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.) received from an old negro in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, and which, with one slight

<sup>1</sup> Compare Cosquin: 'Contes Populaires de Lorraine,' ii, p. 156 ff.; C. C. Jones: 'Negro Myths of the Georgia Coast,' p. 53 ff.; Harris: 'Uncle Remus,' xvii.